

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
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R 101756Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4027  
INFO AMCONSUL BELFAST  
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

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E. O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, SGEN, UK  
SUBJECT: POLL INDICATES IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ISSUES  
DECLINES

REF: LONDON 3548

SUMMARY - AN EARLY MARCH OPINION POLL CONDUCTED BY  
MARKET AND OPINION RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL (MORI)  
SUGGESTS THAT THE IMPACT OF THE IMMIGRATION/RACE ISSUE  
HAS DIMINISHED RAPIDLY. ACCORDING TO THE MORI POLL,  
THE CONSERVATIVE LEAD OVER LABOR IS NOW ONLY A  
STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFICANT TWO PERCENT, DOWN SHARPLY  
FROM A NINE-POINT LEAD IN MID-FEBRUARY. END SUMMARY.

1. A MORI POLL PUBLISHED MARCH 10 BY THE DAILY EXPRESS  
SHOWS A SHARP DECLINE IN PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE  
CONSERVATIVE PARTY SINCE THE FEBRUARY NOP AND GALLUP  
POLLS WHICH GAVE THE TORIES LEADS OF 11 AND 9 PERCENT,  
RESPECTIVELY. ACCORDING TO MORI, THE CURRENT CONSER-  
VATIVE LEAD IS TWO PERCENT, A STATISTICALLY INSIGNIFI-  
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CANT FIGURE. EXCLUDING "DON'T KNOWS", 46 PERCENT OF  
THE MORI RESPONDENTS INDICATED A PREFERENCE FOR THE  
CONSERVATIVES AND 44 PERCENT FOR LABOR. THE MORI DATA  
WAS DEVELOPED FROM AN INTERLOCKING QUOTA SAMPLE OF  
1612 ELECTORS IN 54 CONSTITUENCIES THROUGHOUT BRITAIN  
TAKEN BETWEEN MARCH 3 AND 6.

2. THE NOP AND GALLUP POLLS WERE TAKEN SHORTLY AFTER MRS. THATCHER'S CONTROVERSIAL JANUARY 30 STATEMENT ON IMMIGRATION AND AT THE HEIGHT OF THE ENSUING DEBATE ON IMMIGRATION. MOST OBSERVERS, ACCORDINGLY, ATTRIBUTED THE SHARP INCREASE IN TORY POPULARITY (ALL OF THE POLLS SHOWED THE TWO PARTIES EVENLY PLACED IN JANUARY, POSSIBLE STATISTICAL ERROR DISCOUNTED) LARGELY TO MRS. THATCHER'S ARTICULATION OF POPULAR CONCERN ABOUT IMMIGRATION. THE RESULTS OF THE MORI POLL NOW SUGGEST THAT THE IMPACT OF THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE WAS TRANSITORY, AS WE HAD EARLIER SUSPECTED WOULD BE THE CASE (REFTEL). THE APPARENT SHIFT IN PUBLIC ATTITUDES ONCE AGAIN POINTS UP THE VOLATILITY OF POPULAR OPINION IN THE UK.

3. DATA FROM SEPARATE POLLING ORGANIZATIONS CANNOT BE INTERPRETED WITHOUT CAUTION, AS EACH SURVEY INVOLVES A DIFFERENT SAMPLE AND A DIFFERENT SAMPLING TECHNIQUE, AND IS TAKEN ON A DIFFERENT DATE. NEVERTHELESS, EXPERIENCE INDICATES THEY PICK UP AND REFLECT THE SAME TRENDS. AS REGARDS THE RELIABILITY OF THESE THREE POLLING ORGANIZATIONS, THE FOLLOWING POINTS MAY BE OF INTEREST:

-- MORI - THE GROUP HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE (OR PERHAPS SKILL) TO HAVE CALLED THE LAST THREE GENERAL ELECTIONS WITH THE GREATEST ACCURACY OF THE VARIOUS BRITISH POLLING ORGANIZATIONS. CONSEQUENTLY, IT CURRENTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ENJOYS A REPUTATION AS BRITAIN'S PREMIER POLITICAL POLLING OUTFIT. THE LABOR PARTY IS ONE OF ITS CUSTOMERS. -- GALLUP - ONE OF BRITAIN'S LARGEST AND MOST EXPERIENCED OPINION RESEARCH ORGANIZATIONS, GALLUP PRODUCES THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE SERIES OF ISSUE-ORIENTED DATA ON A REGULAR BASIS AND IS THEREFORE AN INVALUABLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION. ITS POLITICAL PREFERENCE SAMPLE TENDS TO REFLECT A SLIGHT (TWO PERCENT) CONSERVATIVE BIAS. GALLUP'S MONTHLY POLITICAL SURVEYS ARE PUBLISHED IN THE DAILY TELEGRAPH AND IT DOES WORK FOR THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY.

-- NOP - THIS GROUP (WHICH HAS A CORPORATE RELATIONSHIP WITH MORI) DOES NOT HAVE A PARTICULARLY GOOD RECORD IN THE POLITICAL FIELD, AND IN DECEMBER EXPERIENCED SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH ITS PARTY PREFERENCE SAMPLE. THIS PROBLEM HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN RESOLVED, BUT WE WOULD RANK IT AS THE LEAST RELIABLE OF THESE THREE ORGANIZATIONS.

BREWSTER

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## Message Attributes

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